

ON THE USAGE OF *WEN* IN THE EADWINE'S CANTERBURY PSALTER

NISHINARITA Michiwo

0. Introduction

An Old English noun *wen* means 'hope, expectation; likelihood, probability; suppositon, opinion, etc,' and was used to translate, individually or as part of a phrase, such Latin words as 'opinio, spes; putare; forsitan, numquid, etc,' as shown in examples below:

1. Beowulf 2910-3 Nu ys leodum wen
orleghwile, syððan under[ne]
Froncum ond Frysum fyll cyninges
wide weorðeð.
(Now there is likelihood for the people of a time of warfare, as soon as the king's
fall becomes widely known among the Franks and Frisians.)
2. Deor 24-6 Sæt secg manig sorgum gebunden,
wean on wenum, wyscte geneahhe
þæt þæs cyne-rices ofercumen wære.
(Many a man would sit shackled with sorrows, in expectation of misfortune, and
frequently wish that the kingdom might be defeated.)
3. PsGIE 29. 10 Hwylc netnesse on minum blode þonne ic
niðærstige on gegripnesse vel onbrosnunga is þes wen þet
ic þe dust ondette þe oþðe bodað soþfæstnisse þine [quae utilitas meo dum
descendo in corruptionem nunquid confitebitur tibi pulvis aut annuntiabit veritatem
tuam].
AV 30.9 What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust
praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?

1. OE Counterparts for *Num(quid)*

Latin particles *num* and *numquid* introduce direct questions that expect negative replies as in 4 and 5:

4. Num videntur convenire haec nupitiis? (Does this look like a wedding?)
5. Numquid Paulus Hierosolymis interfectus est? (Paul was not killed in Jerusalem, was he?)

Since there was no such word in OE, translators had to resort to a variety of words and phrases to translate them as Ogura (1984) shows in Table 1:

Table 1¹ OE Counterparts for *Num(quid)*

	Li	WS	Rul	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Bo	Bede	Gen	Num	ÆHom	HomS	PPs	Met
(1) hwæðer	25	1													10		2		1			
(2) hu	1																1					
(3) hu nu														1								
(4) hu ne/na						2								1								
(5) la hu												2										
(6) ac/ah	1		7	14	11	5																
(7) ac/ah la										2												
(8) ah ne	7									2												
(9) na														1								
(10) nalæs													1									
(11) VS																1*	7		1			
(12) wenst þu		1										1			5							1
(13) cwyst þu	3	29			1	6	12	2	16	7	9	10	14	10		2	4	4	1		1	
(14) ah cwyst þu			1										1									
(15) segst þu		3															1			2		
(16) is þes wen								9														
(17) hwæt la												1										
(18) hæd	1																					
(19) nymðe								1														
Total	38	34	8	14	12	13	12	12	16	11	9	14	16	13	15	3	15	4	3	2	1	1

While the most frequently used one, *cwyst þu*, occurs in E too, *is þes wen* appears only in E: the Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter. This phrase in E is not only used for *numquid* as in example 3 above, but also for other words such as *forsitan* 'probably' as in 6:

6. PsGIE 118.92 Nimðe ðet ewe þin smeung min is þonne is þes wen ic forwiorðe on eædmodnesse minre [Nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est tunc forsitan preissem in humilitate mea.]

Wenan, the verb form of *wen*, is also used as an equivalent of *forsitan* in the phrase :

7. PsGIE 123.4 *Ic ðies wen oððet weter wiðset æhnæ us*

[*forsitan* velut aqua absorbuissent nos.]

AV 124.4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.

I will examine in the next section OE equivalents in eleven OE Psalters of Latin *forsitan* and those of a Latin verb *spero*, which they often used *wenan* to translate.

2. OE Equivalents of *Forsitan* and *Spero* in Psalter Glosses.

Table 2 OE Equivalent of *Forsitan*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Total
wenunga	4	3	4	4		5	3		3	4	3	33
wenunga/uneape									1			1
wenunga/witodlice									1			1
ic ðies wen					3							3
is ðies wen					2							2
witodlice											1	

Table 3 OE Equivalent of *Spero*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Total
hopian					4	55			22		1	82
hyhtan	70	65	70	70	18	15	67	58	31	71	64	599
truwian									1			1
wenan					27							27
hyhtan/hopian					3				15			18
hyhtan/truiwan									1			1
hyhtan/wenan					18							18
hopian/truwian									1			1

As is seen on Table 2 *ic ðies wen* and *is ðies wen* appear only in E while *wenunga*, derived from *wenan*, is the most used one and appears in every Psalter glosses except E and H. On Table 3 the number of *hyhtan* is overwhelming and is seen in all of the Psalter glosses while, again, *wenan*, including *hyhtan/wenan*, occurs only in E although, unlike *ic ðies wen* and *is*

ðies wen, E also has the other verbs: *hopian* and *hyhtan*. How they are used is shown in the examples below:

8. Ps 118.92 Nisi quod lex tua meditatio est, Tunc forsitan perissem in humilitate mea.
 PsGlD nymþe þæt æ þine smeau³ min ys þonne wenun³a ic forwurde on eadmodnysse minre
 PsPIE Nimðe ðet ewe þin seung min is þonne is þes wen ic forwiorðe on eadmodnesse minre
 AV 119.92 Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.
9. Ps. 123.4 Forsitan (velut) aqua absorbuisset nos.
 PsGlD wenun³a swa swa wæter hy forswul³en us
 PsGIE ic ðies wen oððet weter wiðset æhne us
 PsGlF wenunga wæteru hi forswulgon us
 AV 124.4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
10. Ps. 4.6 Sacrificate sacrificium iustitiae, et sperate in domino.
 PsGlD onsec³aþ onsæ³dnesse ryhtwisnesse 3ehyhten 3e on dryhtne
 PsGIE Onseagæð þa onsegdnesse aþ geoffried offrunge of rihtwisnesse 7 gewenæþ on drihten²
 PsGlF onsecgað onsægednysse rihtwisnysse 7 hopiað on drihtne
 AV 4.5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

Although E belongs to D-type³ the distribution of the words in E is quite different even from that in D too. I will see in the next section whether E's usage of *wen* is peculiar only among the Psalter glosses or it is true of OE on the whole.

3. Usage of *Wen* in OE

According to *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, *wen* (also spelt *wæn*, *wien*, *woen* and *uoen*) appears in oE as follows:

wen		woen	
wen is þæt S	26	hwæðer woen ware	1
ma wen is þæt S	26	woen is+ þæt S	8
adv+is ... wen ... þæt S	13	woen is+ adv	1
him seo wen ge Leah	4	other	1
noun+is wen þæt S	4		
gyf wen wære/sie	4	wæn	1

is þes wen þæt S	9	nis þes wæn (PsGlE 76.8)	
ic ðies wen	2		
others	35	wien	2
Total	98 ⁴	ic ðies wien (PsGlE 123.5)	
		is ðies wien (PsGlE 138.11)	
		uoen	1
		uutedlich vel uoen (Jn (Li) 4.10)	

All the instances of *is þes wen (wien)*, *ic ðies wen (wien)*, and *nis þes wæn* appear only in E; eight of the first are used to translate *numquid* and one *forsitan*. Two instances of *ic ðies wen* are also for *forsitan*⁵. Two instances of *wien* are used for *forsitan* and *wæn* for *numquid*. No instance of *wen is þæt* appears in E although this phrase is most in number as is shown above.

Now I will see examples from other works and in other constructions⁶:

11. ApT 12.22 Wen is þæt þu gemete sumne þe/ þe gemiltsige.
(Ibi forsitan qui misereatur tibi ivenies.) (W006 : 135)
12. Jul 632 Nu is wen micel þæt heo mec eft wille earmne gehynan yflum yrmþum, swa
heo mec ær dyde. (W006 : 132)
(Now there is a great probability that she will again shame wretched me with evil
humiliations, just as she did to me before.)
13. GenA, B 49 Him seo wen ge Leah, siððan waldend his, heofona heahcining, honda
arærde, hehste wið þæm herge.
(This hope played them false when the Ruler, the King of the heavens, raised up his
most sublime hands against that army.) (W006 : 132)
14. Nic (A) Hwæðer hyt wen sig þæt ðu sig se ylca Hælend þe Satan ure ealdor ymbe
spæc & sæde þæt ðurh þynne deað he wolde geweald habban ealles myddanear-
des?
(Is it probable that you are the very Saviour that Satan, our master, spoke of and
said that through your death he would have the control of all the world?)
(W006 : 136)
15. Beo 381 Hine halig God/for arstafum us onsende,/to West-Denum, þæs ic
wen hæbbe,/wið Grendles gryre.
(The holy God has of his mercy sent him to us West-Danes, as I hope, to meet the
terror of Grendel.) (W006 : 133)

The phrase *wen is þæt* appears most of all in OE and as in 11 it can have been used to translate a Latin adverb *forsitan*, still E has no instance of it. The second most numerous phrase is *adv + is ... wen ... þæt + S* as in 12. The third one *him seo wen geleaf*, though small in number, seems to have been a set phrase⁷. in 15 *þæs* is a genitive form of *þæt* and the phrase is used adverbially⁸.

4. Summary

The Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter or E has a peculiar usage of the word *wen* among the psalter glosses. The phrase *is þes wen*, used to translate Latin *num(quid)* and *forsitan*, appears only in E and so does *ic ðies wen*. This is true of the verb *wenan* too; this one appears only in E although there are several other verbs used to translate Latin *spero* in other psalter glosses.

When Old English psalter glossators wanted to translate a Latin adverb *forsitan* they could use *wenung* and so did most of them; only E's glossator ignored it and resorted to *is ðies wen* and *ic ðies wen* as is shown on Table 3.

The phrases *is ðies wen (wien)* and *ic ðies wen (wien)* are peculiar to E no matter what the original Latin is and no other OE work, translation or not, uses them.

Notes

1. The different versions of the OE glosses to the Psalter are abbreviated as PsA: the Vespasian Psalter; PsB: the Junius Psalter; PsC: the Cambridge Psalter; PsD: the Royal or Regius Psalter; PsE: Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter; PsF: the Stowe or Spelman Psalter; PsG: the Vitellius Psalter; PsH: the Tiberius Psalter; PsI: the Lambeth Psalter; PsJ: the Arundel Psalter; PsK: the Salisbury Psalter.

In *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* the letters 'Gl' are inserted after Ps as PsGlA.

2. Many OE verbs appear with a prefix 'ge'.
3. There are two types of OE interlinear glosses to the Psalms excluding I and K: A-type is those glosses based on A's gloss; D-type is those based on D's gloss. q.v. C. Sisam and K. Sisam (1959)'s Introduction.
4. There are four other instances of *wen* in the phrases which are directly cited from Latin-OE glossaries in W006: 139.
5. Numquid: 29. 10; 49. 13; 76. 10; 77. 19; 77. 20; 87. 11; 87. 12; 87. 13.
Forsitan: 118. 92; 123.3; 123.4.
6. All the examples are taken from *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*; in the parentheses at the end of each example are the fiche numbers and pages.
7. The other three examples are: GenA, B 49, GenA, B 1446 and And 1074. (W006: 132).
8. There is one more example of an adverb *þæs*:

LS 4 (Christoph) 51 Se cyningc þa him andswarode bysmerigende & him to cwæð, is þæs wen þæt ðu me swa beswican mæge þæt ic þone god gebidde & minum wiðsace?

(W006: 135)

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